



BILLINGS FARM & MUSEUM

FUN AT HOME

SOAP CARVING

Throughout the 19th century, most children learned how to use knives from a young age. For girls, this mostly involved food and cooking. For boys, this skill was developed on wood and many boys had their own knife. Whittling was a fun pastime that the majority of boys had at least tried their hand at it. The activities and chores that most kids do today may not require the use of sharp knives, but whittling and carving is fun in any time period for anyone.



From the 1881 book [Curious Schools](#) in the chapter about the Boston Whittling School



From the 1906 book [Elementary Sloyd and Whittling](#)

CRAFT: SOAP CARVING

CARVE A BAR OF SOAP INTO A WORK OF ART!

Materials:

- Paper, pencil, scissors (For making the design.)
- Table knife, spoon, paintbrush, paper clips (For carving.)
- A bar of soap (Soap comes in many sizes, shapes, colors, and softness. Find the best one for you.)

Steps:

1. Trace your bar of soap onto the paper and draw your design inside that space. Cut out your shape.
 - a. This can help you see if your shape is simple enough. If it is hard to cut from paper, it will be harder to carve.
2. Trace the design onto the soap with the end of the paintbrush or the paperclip.
3. Use the knife or the spoon to cut away the biggest chunks and the spoon or paper clip to shave off the smaller bits. The back of the spoon can be good for smoothing edges.
 - a. Save your scraps for later use.
4. Add as much detail as you want with the paper clip or the end of the paintbrush.
5. Use the brush to clear away any soap dust.
6. Admire your work!

